

Fatnose Tradition by Pete Blackledge

Received by email on November 26, 2017 at 8:03 am

Dup 3 Mike Input - Fatnose - Input To "Blackledge Stories":

The Blackledge "Fatnose" Tradition —

Input # 1 — Genesis: Two Brothers

Individual families often develop their own special traditions. The Blackledge Family, being rather unique, developed a Tradition which would probably make Tevye fall off his Roof: "The Blackledge Fatnose Tradition."

This tradition initially developed between my brother Mike and me when we were growing up. We devised the mechanism of calling each other "Fatnose" so that we could express the usual brotherly differences with each other without needing to resort to profanity.

When Mike married Helen, the two of them (insert pictures) adopted that same "Fatnose" mechanism in their relationship. This resulted in an amusing incident when they were visited by a rather bulbous-nosed insurance salesman. As Mike and the insurance salesman were sitting on the living room sofa, Helen asked them both if they would like a cup of coffee. The insurance salesman said yes, but Mike said no. Accordingly, Helen brought out one cup of coffee for the insurance salesman and one for herself, putting both cups on the coffee table in front of the insurance salesman and Mike. Helen then went back into the kitchen. When she returned to the living room, she saw Mike was reaching for her cup of coffee. At the same time, the insurance salesman was reaching for his cup of coffee. Seeing Mike pilfering her coffee after he had declined her offer to bring him his own cup, Helen (who was a wonderful amalgam: She contained the softness of Mother Teresa, while also being able to summon up the hearty laugh and booming voice of a truck driver) bellowed "Keep your cotton-picking hands off my coffee, Fatnose!!!" ----- which caused the alarmed bulbous-nosed insurance salesman to draw back in shock and to stammer "Oh, I am so sorry!!!"

During my growing up years, I often wished that I could have the same special Extended Family relationships which many of my friends had. But, unfortunately, I never even saw my grandparents, uncles, aunts, or cousins, except for one short visit by my Uncle Hobert (insert picture). So I vowed that I would endeavor to be the best possible Uncle Pete that I could to my niece and nephews, hopefully providing to them the relationship which I had missed. As part of that, knowing that kids love silliness, I instituted the Fatnose Tradition with each of them ----- to their utter delight.

The Fatnose Tradition also spread to my other siblings, with my newspaper columnist sister Penny even memorializing it in a column she wrote for the Escondido News Reporter (insert picture).

And the Fatnose Tradition was even passed to the next generation! When I first met Alexander's son Zachary at a family reunion, then- 5-year old Zachary (apparently well coached) walked up to me, put out his hand to shake, and announced to me: "Nice to meet you, Fatnose!!!"

Over the years, there have been countless interactions and even events which centered around the Fatnose Tradition — with outrageous Fatnose communications and drawings of me laughingly sent to me by young Alexander Price, Andy Woods, Nick Woods, Doug Blackledge, and David Blackledge. (I will separately send examples of each in followup addendum to this Input). Each of these has warmed my heart, as they displayed a closeness with each of them with me which I had not been able to enjoy with my Extended Family. The Fatnose Tradition truly came to encompass the entire Blackledge Extended Family, as family reunions became photo opportunities during which the entire family (even including 80+ year old Aunt Helen and new family member Seth Heartfield) would laughingly don the array of outrageous noses which I would bring to those events (insert pictures). But it was the

special bond which this Tradition engendered which was its most precious gift. Following the other Blackledge Tradition of "Elevens", which reportedly was started by David Blackledge and which matched our father's key chronological evens (eg, he was 11 years older than our mother, and he lived 11 years longer after her death), here is a brief compendium of ELEVEN events involving Fatnoses (one niece, five nephews), as well as their Spouses ("Nose-ettes"), their Off-Spring ("Nasal-ettes") and their Parents ("Probosci"). They are listed in completely random/chaotic/BrownianMotion order, since the Blackledge Family is constantly in Brownian



Motion:

1. FN Doug: After I had moved to Washington DC, Mike came to visit and we went down to the National Gallery to see all the paintings. As we walked into the Gallery, we immediately were taken by a very large and magnificent painting of a shepherd holding a golden apple and standing before three beautiful women. "Mike". I said, "do you know the background behind this painting? It is amazing, and weaves together history and mythology in extraordinary detail." "No, and I don't want to know", Mike replied huffily as he abruptly changed directions and refused to listen to anything I said. I was mystified, until much later when Mike finally admitted that he just couldn't stand the fact that his little brother knew something that Mike knew nothing about. So, in irritating little brother fashion, I patiently awaited my chance to respond. It came several months later when Doug (then probably in 9th grade) came to visit DC on a field trip with his school class. After first loosening Doug up by taking him to my friend Wanda's apartment, where he was amazed to see ferrets running free on the floor while finches were flying free in the air, I took Doug out to a restaurant, had him & me don the caps which I had made with "Fatnose" emblazoned across the bill, and made him listen to the entire lengthy story behind the painting, which is entitled "The Judgment of Paris." At the end of my story, I presented Doug with a t-shirt on which was emblazoned the immortal words "I Survived The Judgment of Paris." Doug reportedly wore that t-shirt (since he had successfully done something which his father was unable to do) when unsuspecting Mike picked him up at the airport. I have the picture of Doug in his t-shirt proudly displayed on my condo wall. Years later, during a visit to Washington DC by Bonnie Nolan Blackledge's daughter Beth and grandson Garrett, I retold the story to Garrett. Being extremely intelligent, Garrett remembered the entire story and, after arriving back in Albuquerque, reportedly ambushed Mike with it after uttering the taunt "Do you know the story of Judgment Of Paris?" Yes, Little Brothers are a lifetime curse to Big



Brothers!

2. FN David: At one of the Family Reunions in the DC area, we all decided to caravan to some of the local sights. At that time, I had my 280Z two-seater sports car, so I took just David in my car while the rest of the family were scattered among several vehicles. However, the rest of the caravan took off before David and I got in my car, and we were unable to find/follow them. So, since we would therefore not be able to share in the family planning, I decided to give Fatnose David his own special adventure similar to what I had done with his brother Doug. So I took David (then probably in elementary school) to several iconic DC spots, including the Washington Monument and the Botanical Gardens, and took his picture with my Polaroid at each spot as David posed in unique action-adventure fashion (Raiders of the Lost Nose) ; e.g., holding up the Washington Monument, screaming as I pull his hand out of the mouth of an alligator topiary, etc.(insert pictures). I made a special "Fatnose Collage" of those amazing pictures, and have those special pictures of David displayed on the wall of my condo.

3. FNs David and Doug: Mike told me the story of when David was young, and Mike had asked him whom he admired most in the world. Expecting quite a different answer, Mike said he was shocked and "very concerned" when David replied "Uncle Pete." Fast-forward several decades, to a few weeks ago, when Doug sent me a most wonderful e-mail thanking me for being such a "powerful motivation" and "positive influence" in his life. I was so appreciative and touched by both David's and Doug's kind sentiments about this "least of the Siblings." However, I must admit to my daring Doug that he tell his Dad the sentiments he expressed in his e-mail about me because "it will really irritate Mike." (Little brothers are relentless). Approximately five years ago, when Doug was visiting DC on TAD travel from Germany, we went out together. It was close to Valentines Day so at the end of the dinner I presented Doug with a large chocolate heart on which were written the words "Happy Valentines Day, FATNOSE." (Insert pictures), and made a Fatnose Doug collage for him. (insert picture). Again, I have the picture of Doug with that Fatnose chocolate valentine on the wall of my condo.

4. FN Alexander: When Patti brought young Alexander to the Family Reunion at Barbara Tipton's house, she was one afternoon reading Alexander a story. Alex was not totally enthralled, so I decided to enliven the story-telling by outlandishly acting out each line of the story --- incorporating every attention grabber I could from all my years of misbehaving in elementary school, from rubber faces to animal sounds to rolling around on the floor. Alexander was soon laughing uncontrollably, and the vision of his happy laughter is such a great memory.

5. FN Alexander: When Alexander went to Teen Challenge, I sent him a large box of Christian-based t-shirts, each of which had a funny tag-line emblazoned on the front (e.g., "Rapture: The Only Way To Fly"). Alexander reportedly delighted in pulling each one out of the box in front of his Teen Challenge friends, utilizing his unique Alexander-Impish-Grin and masterful magician-like aplomb to fully captivate his audience. Some months later, while Alexander was at Teen Challenge, he wrote that his only problem was that the food was so good that he had become as big as a hippo. So, when Patti and I drove to see Alexander at Teen Challenge, I presented him with a t-shirt which proclaimed --- in Frank Buck fashion --- "This Hippo Brought Back Alive By Christ." (See picture). I have the special picture of Alex wearing his Hippo t-shirt, and pointing dramatically to his nose. displayed on the wall of my condo.

6. Nasal-ettes Zachary, Ariel, Ian, Charlene, and Sarah: When I first met Zachary, he came running up to me and (in truly Blackledge/ADB fashion) thrust out his hand and yelled "Hi, Uncle Fatnose." At that or later reunion, I took my favorite picture of Zachary with his toy airplane, and of Ariel staring at herself in front of the mirror. (Insert pictures). That was also the reunion at Patti's house at which Mike had invoked the theme of voting for the "Most Beloved Sibling." I had actually begged him not to do that, since I really felt that I would (as the least of the Siblings) be embarrassed by being the only Sibling with no votes. When Mike refused to relent, I decided to turn it around by making it a fun mystery. I arranged for flowers and balloons to be sent to me by the Governor of the State of Texas welcoming me as the Most Beloved Sibling, along with a notice in the local paper announcing my arrival in town as the Most Beloved Sibling, along with telegrams and letters of adulation heralding me as the Most Beloved Sibling from every luminary I could think of (including a letter from John F. Kennedy, which he signed posthumously). On the final evening, each Sibling gave a speech about why they should be chosen as Most Beloved Sibling (Patti and Penny did a wonderful twinnny-unison poem). I went last, and --- citing my modesty --- declined the obvious groundswell of worldwide votes for my selection; instead, I quoted Scripture that "The first shall be last, and the last first" and "They shall be led by a child", then bending over and presenting a "Blackledge Bunny Trophy" (a large stuffed pink bunny that I had bought the day before) to "The last...and the child who will lead us" by giving it to toddler Ariel, and asking unanimous acclimation by the family for her election as "Most Beloved". Ariel played her part perfectly, delightedly clutching the pink bunny to her chest, and quickly trundling off

to play with it. I keep a voluminous scrapbook in my condo, which has all the letters, telegrams, etc, (I will send this) as well as the videotape of the final Most Beloved Sibling speeches (expertly videotaped by FN David) for posterity --- or for viewing at a future family reunion. The next time I saw Zachary and Ariel was approximately ten years ago when I drove to New Jersey to visit. I took Zachary and Ariel (who were then probably in elementary school) out to play at the arcade, and then to play miniature golf. (See pictures). Ariel seemed very aloof and uncertain about me at first, so it was a particularly wonderful feeling when she later warmed up and became quite comfortable (it may have been when she beat me at miniature golf) to the point of repeatedly laughing, jumping on me, and holding onto my leg as I walked along. (Insert picture). Again, such a great memory of her wonderful carefree laugh. After miniature golf, I told Zachary and Ariel that I would buy them whatever they wanted as we walked along. Zachary knew exactly what he wanted, as we were near a music store, and Ariel also was excited about getting an instrument. So I bought each of them a musical instrument (fortunately not expensive), which each of them happily played as we walked back to their house. It was so cool to later see Zachary pursuing that musical interest, as he played in a band. It was similarly wonderful to unleash the joy in Ian and Charlene when I visited them in Albuquerque and took them out for a "shopping spree" to buy whatever they wanted. Subsequently, Andy and Anne were kind enough to let me also take Sarah shopping to buy whatever she wanted. and it was such a great joy to later be bonding with Sarah by playing with the Weebles set she had picked out.

7. FNs Andy & Nick: During the 1984 family reunion at Penny's house, I shocked Andy and Nick by challenging them to a backyard basketball game against Mike and myself. Both Andy and Nick were accomplished basketball players, whereas neither I nor Mike had any such talents. However, Mike and I managed to win the game decisively through a combination of jokes (making Andy and Nick laugh too hard to play), trickery and deceit. To this day, Andy and Nick have chosen to selectively dis-remember the event (the devastating loss is obviously too painful for them to recall), but Penny (who pointed out in her 11-11-11 e-mail that she is a Christian, and therefore a most reliable source) fully remembers and has to remind Andy and Nick of their devastating loss each time I bring it up.

8. Nose-ette Tricia, Nose-ette Anne, and Nose-ette June: When David and Tricia got married, I wrote a poem to commemorate their union. I was so touched when I later received a phone call from Tricia advising me that they were having my poem framed and put on their wall. (Insert picture) Similarly, at Andy & Anne's wedding, I recited a poem which I had written in honor of their union. (Insert picture). Again, I was so touched when, years later and again at this summer's reunion at Penny's house, Anne recited from memory several stanzas from my wedding poem to her and Andy (regarding how Anne was such a blessing to Andy, taking him from rumpled shirt and "tie all askew" to "looking GQ"). In 2009, I had the honor of first meeting June when she and Alexander visited me in Alexandria (obviously named for Alexander) and I took them out to dinner. I had been trading e-mails with Alexander and June, and recalled that June had taken great offense at my referring to Alexander as Fatnose. So I decided to avoid bringing up the Fatnose moniker. However, halfway through our dinner, Alexander suddenly turned to me and exclaimed "So where are all the Fatnose zingers? I was looking forward to them". June was shocked, saying that she thought the Fatnose references in my e-mails had been a slight against Alexander. I explained the historic significance of the Fatnose term. and that Alexander had always in my view been most reminiscent physically of a Greek god. June then enthusiastically entered into our Fatnose repartee for the remainder of the dinner, fully earning her Nose-ette wings.

9. FN Debbie: When Debbie was approximately elementary school age, Barbara brought her to Houston to visit us. Debbie had gone outside, but then came back in crying. I asked her what was causing her to cry, and she replied that the neighborhood boys outside were making fun of her. I asked her to go outside again, and I would take care of it. She did, and the boys started taunting her, whereupon I sped across the

street, grabbed both of them by their shirts, threw them to the ground, and pummeled them until they promised never again to disrespect my niece. Debbie told me that I was her hero, in our first meeting !

10. FN Debbie: During that same visit, Debbie told me how excitedly she was looking forward to having Santa Claus come to visit. So I suggested that she leave a note for Santa, along with some cookies and milk because Santa was driving such a long way. Debbie did that, and after she had gone to bed, I (of course, first drinking the milk and eating the cookies --- after all, I am a Blackledge) wrote Debbie a special note from Santa thanking her and telling her what a special girl she was. Debbie was so overjoyed. What a great memory.

11. :Fatnose Culture: Two memorable events demonstrate the expansive impact which Fatnose-ness has had on the broader Blackledge family ---

A. When Seth was coming to his first Blackledge reunion, which would be the first time he had met our family, I was on the same plane with Seth and Barbara. During the flight, I told Seth that the entire family would be meeting us at the airport when we arrived, and they would all be wearing fake noses as part of the Fatnose Culture. I told Seth that, if he wanted to be part of our family, he (along with Barbara and myself) needed to wear a fake nose when he deplaned into the airport. Seth, being a very distinguished white-haired restaurateur, , was very reluctant ----- but Barbara and I managed to convince him. So, when the plane landed, the three of us deplaned wearing the large rubber noses which I had brought (see picture) ---- only to find the entire Blackledge family waiting there WITHOUT ANY FAKE NOSES. Seth turned several shades of red as the entire airport suddenly turned to stare at this elderly gentleman wearing a huge elephant nose, but Barbara thought it was hysterical.

B. When Aunt Helen came to the reunion at Mike's house, she regaled us with the story of how she told her financial advisors that ---despite their protestations --- she was going to cash in her retirement savings bond to pay for her plane ticket to the reunion. After that, "Cash The Bond" became that reunion's slogan. I had brought enough fake rubber noses to adorn the face of every reunion attendee, and Aunt Helen thought it was a great idea --- so I gathered the entire family together, passed out rubber noses to each person, and then took the family picture with all rubber noses prominent, and each of us waving our arms in the air and yelling "Cash The Bond." Again, that special Fatnose memory is captured in a photograph on the wall of my condo.

C. In honor of Mike, and with thanks and congratulations to him for all his tireless work in putting together "Blackledge Stories" and including the above memories, I have had personalized "No Fatnose Left Behind" hats made for his grandchildren, Charlene and Ian. The Blackledge Fatnose Tradition continues!!!